



What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red w/tops
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Onions	No	No	Yellow and red
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Carmens and serranos
Salad Mix	Yes	Plastic	
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds and a couple heirlooms

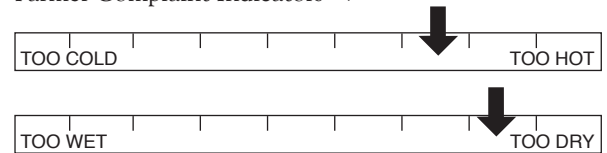
Studies of studies

I thought I'd weigh in on the Stanford study that came out last week concerning the health benefits of organic food. In case you missed it they looked at over 200 existing studies and concluded that there were no measurable health benefits to eating organic food. None of the studies that they looked at involved a period longer than two years, which seems kind of ridiculous. I'm pretty sure that two years isn't enough time to show the negative effects of smoking cigarettes, let alone show a positive effect of eating organic food.

But there are some larger issues at play with a study like this as well. The first is that the vast majority of organic food is produced by very large farms in the Salinas and San Joaquin Valleys of California. The bottom line for these farms is high yield coming at the right time for market demand. A farm like ours makes decisions based on seasonality, quality and nutrition. We spend a lot of money on amendments to our soil to provide produce of the highest nutritional quality possible, not just the big three of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium which is the holy trinity of minerals for the conventional farm. A couple of years ago we even began spreading Icelandic kelp on our fields as a source of many micronutrients in minute amounts which we could never provide otherwise. But rather than applying minerals to produce a crop we are always first and

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Rainfall 0.05"
 High Temperature 94°
 Low Temperature 51°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



foremost trying to apply minerals to feed the soil, so that the biological life in the soil can, in turn, feed the crop.

There have been some efforts to establish a certification for high quality nutrition in crops rather than just organic or conventional, but it's complicated. We might provide everything needed to grow a highly nutritive crop, but have a very wet year which dilutes the intensity of that nutrition in the growing crop, thereby negating any measurable difference in nutritional quality, so it becomes a very difficult thing to quantify.

The other factor that I think is important to mention is that, unfortunately, we live in a polluted world. Our plants receive the same air and water (when it actually rains) as the neighbor's across the street. Toxic residues remain in the soil for decades, not the three years it takes to become certified organic. If you'd like to make an informed decision to lower your family's intake of toxic chemicals, buying organic food is currently the best option for doing so.

Now on to this week's box...

We're finally starting to slow down on the tomatoes this week. The bacterial spot is showing up on the fruit so some of them aren't looking perfect anymore. The good news is, if you have a couple of black specks on a tomato it's very superficial and doesn't really affect what's inside. This may be the first year we've ever had where people are actually getting tired of the tomatoes. Last year I was excited when we surpassed 60 tomatoes per share for the season, and we've obliterated that number, this week puts us past 100. Does it seem like you've gotten 100 tomatoes? I guess that means we've picked close to 18,000 of them.

A couple nice heads of broccoli this week. The warm weather speeds it along so heat waves are not desirable this time of year or all of it gets mature at the same time. We've been enjoying it roasted in the oven, just tossed with a little olive oil and salt.

More lovely spinach this week. Again, the warm days are causing it to get a little big for it's britches, which, in turn, makes it very fragile to harvest, wash and pack. In an effort to handle it more gently this week we experimented with washing it in the field, so that it only had to be packed into boxes once. Some cool nights would be helpful too to toughen it up a bit.

The arugula keeps coming in the heat too. Some of it was a bit small this week, but by next week it would've been too big. If you get a smaller bunch it's the perfect size to add the leaves to the salad mix.

Speaking of salad, there's a nice bag of it in the box. We don't grow a ton of it, but try and get it in a few boxes this time of year. We're also just going with all baby lettuces this year, rather than trying to add mustards and other spicy greens. Our salad spinner at the farm doesn't get it terribly dry, so it will keep better if you wash and spin it at home before putting it away in your fridge. A paper towel in the bag always is a good idea to absorb excess moisture.

The fall beets have been on overdrive and seem to be doubling in size on a weekly basis. With that in mind I thought it was time to get some in the boxes. The beets are large and nice and the tops are tasty and in great shape. Enjoy!

More Lacinato kale is in the box this week. There are still a few unauthorized holes in the leaves despite our regiment of spraying a bacterium which should control the cabbage worms.

The carmen peppers continue to be productive. This week and last week were probably the peak of them and they'll start to wind down with the cooler weather. A handful of serranos are also in the box, they just keep coming. They are our favorite in fresh salsas or cooked ones like the following recipe.

Garlic and onions round out a nice September box. Normally this would be the first week with a winter squash in the box, but I've had some weird problems with our acorn squash this year. They were planted right next to the ill-fated watermelons and seem to have shared some of their ills, as well as the heavier squash bug pressure that was rampant in that field. I'm going to hold them another week before I decide if they're up to snuff.

Farm News

The main news is that it continues to be a very dry period on the farm. The lettuce, arugula and spinach that's in this week's box has never really had a real rain but is the product of irrigation. It's hard to quantify, but irrigation is never the same as rain. Rain is part of the hydrological cycle of our planet, and at each step it becomes a little more rich than water that has been in an aquifer for thousands of years. To me, it is simply that rain is alive, and well water is dead.

We're still making good progress around the farm for this time of year, in fact I think we're ahead of schedule. The potatoes are completely out of the field for the year, worst yields ever. Hopefully we'll have a decent winter to do something about the leafhopper populations that have built up. I'm also doing some research into some other varieties of potatoes that are known for their 'hairy' leaves which can help to alleviate some of these pest pressures.

Coming next week: Broccoli, spinach, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, garlic, green cabbage, gold beets and winter squash.

We love Latin American food in our household and our go-to guide for authentic flavors is always something written by Diana Kennedy. This recipe comes from *Cuisines of Mexico*, and is not dissimilar from what you'd get to dip your chips in at one of the good *taquerías* around town. Even though it calls for 3 whole serranos, it's not terribly hot.

Salsa de Jitomate (cocida)

- 3 medium tomatoes, broiled
- 3 chiles serranos, toasted
- 1/4 onion, roughly chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons peanut or safflower oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt or to taste

Broil the tomatoes under the broiler on a cookie sheet until they are cooked through. They should be blackened and blistered when done (about 20 minutes), if they blacken and blister too quickly move them further away from the heat.

While the tomatoes are broiling toast the chiles over medium heat in a dry skillet, turning every five minutes or so until they are blistered and soft.

Blend the tomatoes, serranos, onion and garlic to a fairly smooth sauce, it should still have some texture.

Heat the oil, add the sauce and salt and cook over a medium flame for about 5 minutes until it has thickened and is well seasoned.